



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTS TO PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY AND WELLNESS**

**LOS ANGELES** –In a step to improve the lives of thousands of children in the county, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has approved a motion authored by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Michael D. Antonovich to designate a single agency to compile, track and monitor data on child deaths.

The county's Chief Executive Officer will present a plan to the board for a single county agency to compile comprehensive data to observe trends and ultimately increase child wellness. This entity would also be responsible for creating a standardized countywide protocol to report critical data in a consistent manner as well as establishing 10 to 15 proposed child wellness indicators to detect trends. Currently, inconsistent countywide data collection practices and definitions make it difficult for the board to develop appropriate, responsive and preventive measures.

The CEO's office will consult with the directors of the Department of Children and Family Services, Health Services and Public Health, the Office of the Coroner and County Counsel and report back to the board in 45 days.

Data gleaned from a recent county report found that last year, the highest number of child deaths occurred among children under the age of one. However, the information was not specific enough to discern whether the majority of these infant deaths were as a result of co-sleeping habits, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or another cause. Similarly, 26

percent of deaths were prenatal deaths. Specific data could better inform the extent to which more aggressive maternal and child health policies could have prevented those tragic outcomes.

Supervisors Ridley-Thomas and Antonovich, maintain that by creating a comprehensive pool of data to understand public health indicators, the county will be better able to establish policies that will prevent tragedies from occurring.

“We need to be proactive about safeguarding our most vulnerable children, and that means having in-depth, up-to-date data about the circumstances of the tragedies that strike them,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “The children of Los Angeles County deserve better and we must step up and deliver for them.”

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